



The life and death of King Iohn.

Actus Primus, Scena Prima.

Enter King Iohn, Queene Elior, Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury, with the Chatillon of France.

King Iohn.
Chat. Thus (after greeting) speaks the King of France,

In my behauiour to the Maiesty.

The borrowed Maiesty of England heere.

Elior. A strange beginning: borrowed Maiesty?

K. Iohn. Silence (good mother) heere the Embassie.

Chat. Philip of France, in right and true behalfe

Of thy deceased brother, Geffrey sonne,

Arthur Plantagenet, laies most lawfull claime

To this faire land, and the Territories:

To Ireland, Poytiers, Aniove, Torayne, Maine,

Desiring thee to lay aside the sword

Which swaies vsurpingly these feuerall titles,

And put the same into yong Arthurs hand,

Thy Nephew, and right royall Scueraigne.

K. Iohn. What followes if we disallow of this?

Chat. The proud controle of fierce and bloody warre,

To inforce these rights, so forcibly with-held,

K. Iohn. Heere haue we war for war, & blood for blood,

Controlement for controlement: so answer France.

Chat. Then take my Kings defiance from my mouth,

The farthest limit of my Embassie.

K. Iohn. Beare mine to him, and so depart in peace,

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France:

For ere thou canst report, I will be there:

The thunder of my Cannons shall be heard.

So hence: be thou the trumpet of our wrath,

And fullen preface of your owne decay:

An honourable conduct let him haue,

Pembroke looke too't: farewell Chatillon.

Exit Chat. and Pem.

Elior. What now my sonne, haue I not euer said

How that ambitious Constance would not cease

Till she had kindled France and all the world,

Vpon the right and party of her sonne.

This might haue beene prevented, and made whole

With very easie arguments of loue,

Which now the mannage of two kingdomes must

With fearefull bloody issue arbitrate.

K. Iohn. Our strong possession, and our right for vs.

Elior. Your strong possession much more then your right,

Or else it must go wrong with you and me,

So much my conscience whispers in your care,

Which none but heauen, and you, and I, shall heare.

Enter a Sheriffe.

Essex. My Liege, here is the strangest controuersie

Come from the Country to be iudg'd by you

That ere I heard: shall I produce the men?

K. Iohn. Let them approach:

Our Abbies and our Priories shall pay

This expeditious charge: what men are you?

Enter Robert Faulconbridge, and Philip.

Philip. Your faithfull subiect, I a gentleman,

Borne in Northamptonshire, and eldest sonne

As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge,

A souldier by the Honor-giuing-hand

Of Cordellion, knighted in the field.

K. Iohn. What art thou?

Robert. The son and heire to that same Faulconbridge.

K. Iohn. Is that the elder, and art thou the heyre?

You came not of one mother then it seemes.

Philip. Most certain of one mother, mighty King,

That is well knowne, and as I thinke one father:

But for the cerraine knowledge of that truth,

I put you o're to heauen, and to my mother;

Of that I doubt, as all mens children may.

Elior. Out on thee rude man, y dost shame thy mother,

And wound her honor with this diffidence.

Phil. I Madame? No, I haue no reason for it,

That is my brothers plea, and none of mine,

The which if he can proue, a pops me out,

At least from faire five hundred pound a yeere:

Heauen guard my mothers honor, and my Land.

K. Iohn. A good blunt fellow: why being yonger born

Doth he lay claime to thine inheritance?

Phil. I know not why, except to get the land:

But once he slandered me with bastardy:

But where I be as true begot or no,

That still I lay vpon my mothers head,

But that I am as well begot my Liege

(Faile fall the bones that tooke the paines for me)

Compare our faces, and be Iudge your selfe

If old Sir Robert did beget vs both,

And were our father, and this sonne like him:

O old Sir Robert Father, on my knee

I giue heauen thanks I was not like to thee.

K. Iohn. Why what a mad-cap hath heauen lent vs here?

Elior. He hath a trick of Cordellions face,

The accent of his tongue affecteth him:

Do you not read some tokens of my sonne

In the large composition of this man?

K. Iohn